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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

**Chinese Principles
of Operational Deception**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

This study serves to independently determine China's principles of operational deception in relation to those of the United States. An analysis of Chinese employment of operational deception in each modern day Chinese conflict since the Chinese Civil War determines that China's principles of operation match those of the United States. Insight into the value China places in surprise and deception is coupled with certain methods of employing deception characteristic of Chinese operations to make reasonable assessments about how China might employ operational deception during a future conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Recommendations include a more detailed study into Chinese methods of employing operational deception and a review of contingency plans involving China to ensure the enemy's use of operational deception has been properly taken into account.

I. Introduction

Over the past two decades, the United States and China have become increasingly competitive on various levels, economically as well as militarily. Comments and overtures by officials and analysts of both countries indicate the possibility of a future military confrontation between these nation-states, most likely involving the question of Taiwan sovereignty. It is reasonable to assume that the Americans and the Chinese have each developed operational plans to address any contingency in the Taiwan theatre. Essential to the successful development of any operational plan is a thorough knowledge of one's opponent, especially regarding their application of operational art. Surprise serves as one of the principles of operational art for American and Chinese armed forces alike. Deception is a key element of surprise. An understanding of an enemy's concept of operational deception provides the combatant commander valuable insight which enables him to anticipate and counter deception plans initiated against his forces.

Certain principles have been attributed to deception, such as security, plausibility, and coordination. Yet, unlike the principles of war, which differ to varying degrees among the nations of the world, the principles of deception appear to have been articulated assuming universal applicability. An inaccurate assumption that the enemy's principles of operational deception match those of the United States could blind the combatant commander to deceptive maneuvers and lead to disastrous missteps. Twentieth century history and recent studies of military strategy indicate that Chinese leaders place significant value on surprise, and are willing and capable of using deception to achieve it.¹ This study will analyze Chinese principles of operational deception in relation to those of the United States in order to shed light on the potential use of operational

¹ Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Annual Report to Congress: The Military Power of the People's Republic of China, 2005" prepared by the Department of Defense (Washington, D.C., 2005); available from www.defenselink.mil/news/Jul2005/d20050719china.pdf; Internet, 16.

deception against American forces in the event of a conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Specifically, it will determine whether the Chinese principles of operational deception match those of the United States.

The data necessary to make this determination will be collected through a study of all Chinese military conflicts since the Chinese Civil War. The following commonly accepted American principles of deception will serve as a baseline for comparison: Centralized Control, Coordination, Preparation, Time, Flexibility, Plausibility, Security, Intelligence Management, and Confirmation of Enemy Reaction.² The principles underlying Chinese use of operational deception in each of their modern day conflicts will be evaluated and compared to those of the United States. Authoritative writings that provide insight into modern Chinese operational deception will also be used to reach reasonable conclusions about these principles. The results should reveal that the Chinese principles of operational deception are similar to those of the United States.

II. Research and Analysis

Operational deception was found to be an important part of every Chinese military conflict from the Chinese Civil War through the Sino-Vietnam War, with the exception of the Taiwan Strait Crises of the 1950s. The research validated the premise that China's operational deception is based on the same principles as those of the United States. While no particular principle appears to be emphasized more by the Chinese than by Americans, the study re-affirmed that China places great value on the element of surprise.

² Jon Latimer, *Deception in War* (Woodstock, New York and New York: The Overlook Press, 2001), 60-70, and Milan N. Vego, *Operational Warfare* (Newport, Rhode Island: U.S. Naval War College, 2000), 503-510.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the principles of operational deception demonstrated by the Chinese military in each of these conflicts. The study also discovered that the Chinese occasionally resort to unconventional action to accomplish their deceptive aims. Additionally, they have made use of “strategic timing” in the implementation of their operational deception plans at the commencement of offensive operations. These two concepts, strategic timing and use of unconventional action, were added to the list of universally applied principles of operational deception for analysis.

Table 1

Principles of Operational Deception Evidenced in Chinese Military Operations Since the Chinese Civil War, Inclusive

	Cent. Control	Coord.	Prep.	Time	Flex	Plaus.	Sec.	Intel Mang.	Confirm	Strat Time	Unconv. Action
Chinese Civil War	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Korean War	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Taiwan Strait Crises, 1950s											
Sino-Indian War	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Sino-Soviet Conflict	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Sino-Vietnam War	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) appears to possess a comprehensive understanding of the principles of operational deception and how to apply them to achieve surprise. At the onset of their entry into the Korean War, the Chinese executed a deception plan that incorporated each of these principles, misleading General MacArthur and his forces regarding the disposition of their forces and their intent. Anticipating the possibility of becoming involved in this conflict, Chinese leaders began devising plans for turning back the advancing forces of the United Nations (UN) more than three months

prior to crossing the Yalu River.³ This allowed them the time necessary to instigate a coordinated set of radio communications in the clear that led UN forces to believe that 12-18 (instead of 6-11) Chinese armies were massing in Manchuria, but still located well-short of the border with Korea. The preparation time also permitted the Chinese to gauge how General MacArthur, the target of the deception plan, was processing the misinformation and reacting to it. Having apparently compromised Allied operational security, the Chinese were able to confirm MacArthur's reaction and track the disposition and movement of his forces.⁴ Accordingly, the Chinese set a date for their entry into North Korea, and even hastened it based on intelligence reporting an accelerated Allied advance. Under radio silence and the cover of darkness (which included turning off the lights of all vehicles), the Chinese quietly moved four armies across the Yalu River over the course of five days. Though they encountered some UN forces sooner than desired, the Chinese continued the execution of their deception plan by taking unconventional approaches, including the use of North Korean People's Army (NKPA) uniforms, the assumption of fictitious NKPA regiment designations, and the release of several prisoners-of-war captured during the initial engagements while feigning retreat.⁵ These actions furthered the perception MacArthur's staff wanted to believe: that only a few Chinese had entered North Korea and that the bulk of the Chinese forces still remained north of the Yalu River. Consequently, MacArthur chose to maintain his troops in the vicinity of the Yalu, unaware of the true nature of the threat before him. China's surprise entry into the Korean War serves to illustrate that their understanding of the principles of operational deception is much the same as that of the United States. It also demonstrates their ability to effectively put these principles into practice.

³ Patrick C. Roe, *The Dragon Strikes: China and the Korean War: June-December 1950*, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, Inc., 2000), 71-73.

⁴ Ibid., 407-409.

⁵ Ibid., 148, 402-404.

This study discovered that the use of unconventional action might also be a standard Chinese principle of operational deception. Unconventional actions, as previously mentioned, were taken to maintain the extent of China's deployment into the Korea a secret. The Chinese also took unconventional action in its deceptive maneuvers at the onset of the Sino-Soviet conflict, sending troops in advance of a follow-on force to bury themselves in foxholes on the contested island of Damansky/Zhenbao. These troops allegedly fired upon a Soviet Officer-in-Charge and his soldiers the next day as they harmlessly stood in defiance of the arrival of the follow-on Chinese force, which also used deceit to initiate deadly hostilities.⁶ While these unconventional actions merit consideration in relation to the Chinese principles of operational deception, there is insufficient historical precedence throughout modern Chinese conflicts to sustain it as a fundamental element of operational deception. Recent writings suggest the use of unconventional weapons and tactics have become an area of keen interest to Chinese military leaders.⁷ However, their use of unconventional action should be regarded as a method of employing deception rather than as a principle of operational deception.

China's use of timing when exercising operational deception also deserved analysis. A possible trend was discovered in the use of timing as a means of masking the commencement of major offensive operations. In every conflict since the Chinese Civil War, China's enemies have received indications that the Chinese were about to strike. Yet, repeatedly their foes have been surprised by the timing of these attacks. A detailed study of these situations indicates that the Chinese sometimes lull their opponents into a momentary false sense of security by creating strategic events that would traditionally

⁶ Thomas Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Conflicts of 1969: New Evidence Three Decades Later," *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience Since 1949*, David M. Finkelstein, Michael A. McDevitt, and Mark A. Ryan, eds. (Armonk, New York and London: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 199-201, 208-210.

⁷ Michael Pillsbury, *China's Military Strategy Toward the U.S.: A View from Open Sources*, 2 November 2001, available from http://www.uscc.gov/beseanchieports/200_2003/pdfs/strat.pdf; Internet, 8-13, 17.

preclude the commencement of hostilities. For instance, the visit of India's Foreign Minister to Beijing while Chinese forces stood poised for war at Vietnam's border could have perpetuated the idea that there would be a delay in the forthcoming invasion.⁸ Likewise, the transit of a Chinese delegation to the United Nations in November 1950 appeared to indicate the Chinese were attempting to arrive at a peaceful settlement. Instead, the delegation's slow transit facilitated the completion of Chinese preparations for its first offensive on the Korean Peninsula, which unexpectedly commenced as the delegation arrived in New York.⁹ However, this skillful timing of strategic events to blind the enemy to the impending execution of military operations, termed "strategic timing" for the purposes of this study, does not constitute a principle of Chinese operational deception. Were it fundamental to most all of their operational deception plans, it might merit such a designation. To date, strategic timing appears to be a method of employment used by the Chinese almost exclusively in operational deception plans that support their initial offensive in a given conflict. Nevertheless, its use in this context is significant and should be accorded due respect by any combatant commander planning for a potential conflict with the Chinese.

Chinese use of operational deception during the 1950's crises in the Taiwan Straits was virtually nonexistent. This may be explained by their perception of relative strength with respect to their enemy. The Chinese limited their combat operations so as to avoid any direct confrontation with American forces. Their only opponent would have been the Chinese Nationalists (the Guomindang or GMD). And the PRC considered their forces superior to those of the GMD. This might have led Beijing to depreciate the value of operational deception as a force multiplier. Their behavior in this matter is consistent

⁸ Harlan W. Jencks, "China's 'Punitive' War on Vietnam: A Military Assessment," *Asian Survey* XIX, no. 8 (August 1979): 805.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Roe, 214-216.

with that of Western powers, which tend to downplay the merits of operational deception when facing a weaker foe.¹⁰ While this finding does not directly contribute to answering the point in question, it shows how other Chinese concepts of operational deception mirror those of the United States, making the theory of matched principles of operational deception more plausible.

Likewise, China's use of operational deception across strategic and tactical levels indicates symmetry with Americans in their application of this art. Operational deception can be broad in scope, encompassing deception efforts on strategic, operational, and tactical levels to achieve its desired intent. China's aforementioned use of strategic timing during the Korean War and the Sino-Vietnam War demonstrates Chinese operational deception efforts at strategic levels. The Chinese also exercised operational deception at the tactical level during their civil war when they exposed their soldiers during the LiaoShen and the HuaiHai campaigns in order to selectively draw out enemy forces and lead them into ambushes. The maneuvers ultimately led to victories which dictated the operational tone of the campaigns.¹¹ These examples of operational deception, extending to strategic and tactical levels, parallel the broad extent to which the United States applies operational deception, suggesting again that the two nations share the same fundamental ideas regarding operational deception.

Some might argue that the historical sources for determining Sino principles of operational deception are too far removed from today's Chinese military to serve as a valid reference. Indeed, the last modern Chinese conflict was 27 years ago during the Sino-Vietnam War. And the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) performance in that war was less than stellar, while their use of operational deception after the initial strike was

¹⁰ Milan N. Vego, "Operational Deception in the Information Age," *Joint Force Quarterly: JFQ*, 30 (Spring 2002): 60.

¹¹ Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 2003), 192-197, 206-209.

minimal. The Chinese military has also experienced a significant modernization since 1979. And they have not been forthcoming regarding their military doctrine. Therefore, it is plausible that, despite what has been deduced from modern Chinese military history, the Sino principles of operational deception may have undergone changes.

Recent analysis of Chinese military thought indicates that these principles remain unchanged. Specifically, Chinese and American writings on China's ability to conduct psychological warfare have noted the importance of operational security, plausibility, intelligence management, coordination, and centralized control when conducting deception operations.¹² Analysis made by the U.S. Congress in its annual report on Chinese military power also supports the notion that Chinese principles of operational deception remain the same as they were throughout the second half of the twentieth century.¹³ Chinese military articles on information warfare and stratagem in the past decade also convey that Chinese principles of operational deception have not changed.¹⁴

III. Recommendations

The findings of this study have important implications for the combatant commander faced with countering the Chinese in combat. Deception is a tool of surprise. And the Chinese place significant value in the element of surprise.¹⁵ An understanding of China's principles of operational deception, coupled with an appreciation for the role of surprise in Chinese operational art, will allow a combatant commander to more readily anticipate, recognize, and counter Sino deceptive maneuvers. Applicable operational

¹² Laura K. Murray, "China's Psychological Warfare," *Military Review* 79, Issue 5 (Sep/Oct 1999), 13-19.

¹³ Ibid., Office of the Secretary of Defense, 16.

¹⁴ Timothy Thomas, *Dragon Bytes: Chinese Information – War Theory and Practice* Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2004), 79-95.

¹⁵ Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century* (London and New York: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 102.

contingency plans should be reviewed against this backdrop. Specifically, the potential use of operational deception to thwart American forces during a confrontation in the Taiwan Strait ought to be re-evaluated to ensure these possibilities are aligned with Chinese perspective. This evaluation should recognize the precedent set by the Taiwan Strait Crises of 1995-96, as well as the effects of relative military strength on the use of operational deception.

In the summer of 1995, China took exception to Taiwan leader Lee Teng-hi's visit to the United States. Viewing the visit as an American shift from its One China policy toward one that would support Taiwan independence, the Chinese publicly denounced the visit and initiated a series of missile tests off the Taiwan coast. The White House did little to criticize China's reactions. Later that year, as the campaign for Taiwan's first direct presidential election began to take shape, the PRC began staging their forces along the southeast Chinese coast for war games. Concerned about Chinese intentions, the United States sent the USS Nimitz through the Taiwan Strait in December as a display of force. However, in February 1996, the Chinese began moving missiles, heavy equipment, and several brigades into the Fujian Province, located across the Taiwan Strait from Taiwan. Then, three weeks prior to the March 23 election, China announced plans to conduct live fire exercises in the Taiwan Strait commencing March 8. Unlike their response to China's missile tests in 1995, the United States acted with resolve, sending two carrier battlegroups to the waters off Taiwan within a matter of days. The PRC leadership was surprised by the immediate and decisive American response, and eventually scaled back its exercises and passed along discreet assurances to American leaders that no Chinese military action would be taken against Taiwan.¹⁶

¹⁶ Parris H. Chang. "Lessons from the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis for the U.S., Japan, and Taiwan," *Harvard Studies on Taiwan: Papers of the Taiwan Studies Workshop*, 3 (2000); available from <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~fairbank/tsw/chang.html>; Internet.

This crisis provides valuable insight into the ways China might approach a future military confrontation in the Taiwan Strait. The Chinese took note of America's resolve and its ability to quickly intervene and limit China's military options. One of the lessons learned is quite clear: if the Chinese ever intend to seize the island of Taiwan, they must attack swiftly, before America can respond adequately. Or, they must employ assets that will cripple the ability of the United States military to respond. Both actions highlight the need for operational deception. The former requires deception that masks intention. The latter necessitates deception that conceals capability. How these aims might be achieved is of significant consequence to the combatant commander, and must be understood from a Chinese perspective.

America has traditionally downplayed the merits of surprise and deception, to its detriment.¹⁷ China, on the other hand, holds surprise and deception in high esteem. They recognize the value of deception as a force multiplier, and, therefore, expect to incorporate it into most, if not all, of their operations.¹⁸ Their coordination and preparations in support of their deception plans should be expected to be detailed and complete, and protected by a high degree of operational security. While this may appear similar to how Americans would describe their deception efforts, Chinese belief in the importance and potential success of these plans appears to be significantly greater than that held by Americans. Increasing the significance China places on deception in a conflict with the United States is the power imbalance that exists between the two militaries, which encourages the Chinese to use deception as a force multiplier to close the power gap. Therefore, combatant commanders should expect China to make full use

¹⁷ Ibid., Vego, 60.

¹⁸ Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Annual Report to Congress: The Military Power of the People's Republic of China, 2003" prepared by the Department of Defense (Washington, D.C., 2003); available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/20030730chinaex.pdf>; Internet, 19-21.

of deception to surprise American forces in ways that prevent them from being able to fully engage Chinese forces.

With this understanding of China's perspective, one can better approach the question of how the Chinese might conceal their intentions and their capabilities in support of an attack on Taiwan. Concealing the mobilization of large forces from the United States in an age of satellite surveillance and rapid communication can prove extremely difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. In a Taiwan Strait scenario, the Chinese would be left with two options to conceal their mobilization: 1) convince America that Chinese forces are not mobilizing for an engagement with Taiwan; or 2) incapacitate the equipment that would track these movements. Both options are feasible, but difficult to accomplish. The first option is more traditional in nature. In the name of fleet exercises, warships and troops would be positioned close enough to Taiwan that they could be unleashed on order to accomplish an amphibious assault. This tactic, though, would be difficult to decouple from the tensions that have led to these actions. The United States would almost certainly deploy a carrier to the region. However, the establishment of annual exercises that bring Chinese forces to the Taiwan Strait on a regular basis could dull American sensitivities over the years, eventually allowing Beijing to amass its forces in the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait without American military presence. Combatant commanders should guard against such complacency, which might exist on a political level and constrain the military's ability to respond appropriately to these exercises.

China's second option to conceal its intentions - incapacitating surveillance equipment - requires the use of unconventional action. By means of space- or land-based weaponry, through the use of computer viruses, or by employment of deceptive indicators, the PRC could incapacitate select American satellites or computers long enough to blind their surveillance systems to Chinese force mobilization. The source of

the attack would be masked until after its knowledge became inconsequential. While this course of action may seem far-fetched to many Americans, one should note that the Chinese are pursuing unconventional ideas and technology that lead to asymmetrical advantages, that they have resorted to unconventional action to achieve their aims of deception and surprise, and that they have identified America's space and computer systems as critical vulnerabilities.¹⁹ An attack on these systems is a viable option which should not be underestimated.²⁰ Greater effort should be made to defend against these tactics, and more thought should be given to contingency plans that could provide for sustained operations and rapid recovery from such an attack.

Recognizing that their attempts to conceal their intentions in the Taiwan Strait might be unsuccessful, the Chinese would simultaneously pursue another element of operational deception: concealing their capabilities. In particular, they would attempt to hide their ability to paralyze the American forces that are expected to enter the region to defend Taiwan. Over the past ten years, the Chinese have placed emphasis on the development of weapons that could stun and cripple an unsuspecting, powerful opponent. This type of weapon, otherwise known as Assassin's Mace or *shashoujian*, has garnered a lot of attention in American military circles.²¹ Much speculation has been made about what this weaponry might constitute. Network viruses, new types of mines, lasers that destroy satellites, tsunami generators, and plasma weapons illustrate the possible nature of these weapons, the very type that could make the unthinkable attack on American surveillance systems a reality. Whatever these weapons may be, the Chinese appear intent

¹⁹ Ibid., Blasko, 102; Ibid., Thomas, 90-91; and Major General Wu Guoqing, "Future Trends of Modern Operations," *Chinese Views of Future Warfare*, Michael Pillsbury, ed., Revised Edition (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1998), 346-347.

²⁰ Major General Wang Pufeng, "The Challenge of Information Warfare," *Chinese Views of Future Warfare*, Michael Pillsbury, ed., Revised Edition (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1998), 321-323.

²¹ Jason E. Bruzdinski, "Demystifying *Shashoujian*: China's Assassin's Mace Concept" in *Civil-Military Change in China: Elites, Institutes, and Ideas After the 16th Party Congress*, Larry Wortzel and Andrew Scobell, eds. (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2004), 309-317.

on their development.²² The nature of these weapons and their existence are likely to remain secret until they are employed. Thus, their enemies will be less likely to create an appropriate defense to counter them, and the shock effect produced by their capabilities will be maintained. Unfurled and employed against American forces as they attempt to intervene in the Taiwan Strait, these weapons could quickly upset the power dynamics between the two militaries and allow the Chinese to initiate and complete their operations to seize Taiwan before the American military could recover. It is incumbent upon combatant commanders to recognize these potential threats facing American forces - especially naval forces - entering the region, and to seek the intelligence and defense capabilities necessary to anticipate and counter these threats.

In any Taiwan Strait scenario, the Chinese will attempt to reduce the impact of American intervention by disguising the timing of their attack. Initiating an offensive when least expected, the PRC would, at least momentarily, gain the upper hand and press forward to seize whatever ground they could before American forces would begin to hinder their advance. Combatant commanders and their staffs should consider China's opportunities to employ strategic timing to exploit strategic dynamics to catch Taiwan's defenders unawares. By maintaining a vigilant posture, staying attuned to intelligence, and expecting the unexpected, combatant commanders can reduce the likelihood of being surprised by the timing of China's initiation of hostilities.

In summary, if the Chinese were to go on the offensive against Taiwan, the combatant commander responsible for the region could expect China to deceptively employ its forces for exercises somewhere along the East China Sea in preparation for an assault. A missile attack to soften Taiwanese defenses would commence at an unexpected moment. This barrage might be preceded by an attack on American surveillance and

²² Ibid., 329-332.

communication systems. In the meantime, Chinese forces would reposition for a follow-on amphibious assault. American naval forces arriving on the scene prior to the surrender of Taiwan could encounter a set of unconventional weapons that paralyzes them long enough to prevent their intervention in the conflict. By the time these forces recovered, they could be faced with the task of liberating rather than defending Taiwan, something the American people may not consider worth the blood of their sons and daughters.

Although the Chinese place greater value on surprise and employ some different deception tactics than Americans, it is important to remember that the principles of operational deception remain the same between the two nations. This means that China will take time to coordinate and prepare their deception plans using a centralized command and control under tight operational security. They will instigate intelligence mechanisms to feed deceptive information to their enemy. And they will take the time to confirm that this information is having the desired effect on their opponent's thinking. This presents several opportunities for American assets to target, discover, and exploit information, which, if taken advantage of, would provide combatant commanders with the intelligence and the tools they need to see past the guises they are presented by the Chinese. This requires a robust intelligence-gathering mechanism. Military leaders should aggressively seek the development and improvement of this mechanism. At the same time, they should carefully consider the potential operational deception plans that could be devised and employed against American forces from a Chinese perspective, and consider how American operational plans for a Taiwan Strait scenario take into account these ploys and the possibility that some of them may even be successful. The combatant commander who is able to do this will be well-suited to respond to any eventuality and capable of turning would-be disaster into victory.

IV. Conclusions

China's principles of operational deception merited a review to determine whether the assumption that their principles match those of the United States is correct. The study found that the two nations share identical principles, namely: Centralized Control, Coordination, Preparation, Time, Flexibility, Plausibility, Security, Intelligence Management, and Confirmation of Enemy Reaction. This finding allows certain basic assumptions to be made about how the Chinese will employ operational deception. At the same time, one should bear in mind that the Chinese place more value on surprise and deception than Americans. The likelihood that China would use deception to achieve surprise in a conflict with the United States is increased by the power imbalance that exists between their military forces. China has been known to use unconventional action in their employment of operational deception. Additionally, history shows that the Chinese have attempted to use the timing of strategic events to mislead their opponents into believing a pending attack had been postponed. Using China's perspective on operational deception and the lessons they learned from the Taiwan Crisis of 1995-96, combatant commanders can better estimate how the PRC leadership might choose to incorporate operational deception in the event of a future crisis in the Taiwan Strait, and develop the measures necessary to recognize and counter these deception plans.

Leaders with responsibilities that include China in their Area of Responsibility should review their contingency plans with respect to China to ensure Sino operational deception has been correctly factored into these plans. An in-depth study of Chinese methods of employing operational deception should be conducted in order to provide additional insight to these reviews. Likewise, combatant commanders should enhance their ability to defeat Chinese operational deception plans by studying the application of counter-deception and reading available literature on current Chinese military thinking.

Those who prepare themselves will have the wisdom and skill to overcome the operational deception efforts they encounter, and be able to turn these efforts into advantages that enhance the operational effectiveness of American forces.

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